

Thomas Jefferson to John Bacon, April 30, 1803, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO JOHN BACON J. MSS.

Washington, Apr. 30, 1803.

Dear Sir, —Your favor of the 11th has been received, & I thank you for the communication on Indian affairs. I observe what you say on the aspect of your elections. Although federalism appears to have boasted prematurely of it's gains, yet it does not appear to have yielded as we might have expected to the evidence either of their reason or their senses. Two facts are certainly as true as irreconcilable. The people of Massachusetts love economy and freedom, civil & religious. The present legislative & executive functionaries endeavor to practice economy & to strengthen civil & religious freedom. Yet they are disapproved by the people of Massachusetts. It cannot be that these had rather give up principles than men. However the riddle is to be solved, our duty is plain, to administer their interests faithfully & to overcome evil with good.

You have seen that the government of Spain has instantly redressed the infraction of treaty by her intendant at New Orleans; and that, by a reasonable and peaceable process, we have obtained in 4. months what would have cost us 7. years of war, 100,000 human lives, 100 millions of additional debt, besides ten hundred millions lost by the want of market for our produce, or depredations on it in seeking markets, and the general demoralizing of our citizens which war occasions. I have the satisfaction to add that we have received official information that in the instrument cession of Louisiana by Spain to France, is this clause "saving the right acquired by other powers in virtue of treaties made with them by Spain." Although I am not sanguine in obtaining a cession of New Orleans

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for money, yet I am confident in the policy of putting off the day of contention for it, till we are stronger in ourselves, & stronger in allies, but especially till we shall have planted such a population on the Mississippi as will be able to do their own business, without the necessity of marching men from the shores of the Atlantic 1500 or 2000 miles thither, to perish by fatigue & change of climate. Accept my friendly salutations & assurances of high respect.

P. S. I enclose you a pamphlet.